

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace the originally filed claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 14 (cancelled)

Claim 15 (previously presented): A method of starting up an air-separation/metal-production installation comprising a system of columns, means for feeding a booster compressor (C1, C2) with compressed air and means for sending air from the booster compressor to at least one column (MPC, MC) of the column system and means for withdrawing a gaseous product (O) from one column of the column system in order to send it to the metal production unit, the booster compressor being driven by a variable-speed motor (M, M'), wherein, during a startup period of the metal production unit, the speed of the motor is higher than the speed of the motor during steady operation of the unit.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method of claim 15, in which the motor (M, M') turns at one of the two speeds, the motor turning at a first speed during startup of the metal production unit (BF) and at a second speed during steady operation of the unit, the first speed being higher than the second speed.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The method of claim 16 in which the motor is supplied with AC current at a higher frequency during startup of the metal production unit (BF) than the frequency of the current during steady operation of the unit.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The method of claim 17, in which the frequency of the current is variable.

Claim 19 - 20 (cancelled):